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OLAF LILJEKRANS AND IBSEN'S LITERARY  
DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

In *Olaf Liljekrans* (1856) there is reflected a most marked transition in Ibsen's early literary ideals. After reachings its high-water mark the previous year (1855) in *Gildet paa Solhaug*, the tide of ballad poetry had now begun to recede. The more extensive use of prose and the satirical attitude towards Romantic idealism in *Olaf Liljekrans* indicate a decline in Ibsen's development as a Romanticist, which was, however, not so abrupt as may appear.

In 1854, the year before *Gildet paa Solhaug*, he had written *Fru Inger til Østraat*, the first of his national historical dramas. During the composition of this work he became interested in the medieval history of Norway, which brought him much closer to reality than did the legendary past, as represented by Norwegian folk lore. But an entirely new vista was opened to him when, in this same year (1854), N. M. Petersen's translation of the Icelandic sagas by chance fell into his hands. His keen dramatic instinct immediately apprehended the rich source of dramatic material in these classic monuments of Old Norse culture, and in some indistinct way sought to construct the outlines of a future play. This play (as Ibsen himself tells us, in his *Fortale* to *Gildet paa Solhaug*, 1883) was based upon the impressions which he had received from reading the *Volsungasaga*; the famous quarrel between the two women, Brynhild and Gudrun, furnished him with the central motif for the plot. The scene of the quarrel is transferred to the banquet hall, but the spirit of the two women and the fatal collision of hostile forces remain the same.<sup>1</sup> Such proved, in fact, to be the inception of *Hærmændene paa Helgeland* (1857), in which the two figures of Hjördis and Dagny are the direct counterparts of Brynhild and Gudrun in the *Volsungasaga*.

But much intervened which prevented Ibsen from immediately

<sup>1</sup> "Et stort gilde med æggende og skæbnesvangre sammenstød skulde der være i stykket."

completing his new Viking play. His interest in the folk ballad, for instance, led him in this year (1854) to make a close study of Landstad's famous collection of Norwegian folk ballads, which had just appeared the year before (1853). So it happened in 1855 that the tragedy *Hærmændene paa Helgeland*,<sup>2</sup> which had existed only in the vaguest outlines in Ibsen's mind, was temporarily converted into the lyrical drama, *Gildet paa Solhaug*. Practically the same theme and especially the same tragic figures were preserved. Margit and Signe thus represent Hjördis and Dagny in *Hærmændene*.

*Olaf Liljekrans* was written during the year (1856) intervening between the composition of *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1855) and that of *Hærmændene* (1857); therefore, it is possible that the impression from the sagas, which Ibsen developed in these two plays, may also have left its trace in *Olaf Liljekrans*. Much has been written<sup>3</sup> about *Olaf Liljekrans* in its bearing upon Ibsen's literary development, but the question of a possible connection between this work and *Hærmændene* has been almost entirely overlooked.

A work of such composite nature as *Olaf Liljekrans* leads the investigator in many directions; there is much which connects it with the literary traditions of the time, and much that points the way towards new ideals, which were later to take definite shape in the poet's mind. The satirical elements of the play, for instance, are presented in the traditional form of the Danish comedy and are clearly connected with the spirit and form of *Sankt Hansnatten* (1852) written during Ibsen's *Andhrimner* period, where the first glimpses of his hostility to Romantic sentimentality are discerned. On

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Fortale til Gildet paa Solhaug*, 1883: "Således skede det, at det formløst gærende udkast til tragedien "Hærmændene på Helgeland" foreløbbig forvandlede sig til det lyriske drama "Gildet på Solhaug."

<sup>3</sup> The most illuminating criticisms on *Olaf Liljekrans* are: Georg Brandes, *Henrik Ibsen*, Tredje Indtryk, pp. 128-135, København, 1898. Fredrik Paasche, *Gildet paa Solhaug*, pp. 35, 54, 65, 88, 90-91, Smaaskrifter fra det litteraturhistoriske Seminar, No. V, Kristiania, 1908; *Olaf Liljekrans, Et bidrag til studiet av Ibsens forhold til vore viser og sagn*, Maal og Minne, pp. 142-161, Kristiania, 1909. Emil Reich, *Henrik Ibsens Dramen*, pp. 36-39, Berlin, 1913. V. Vasenius, *Henrik Ibsen, Ett Skaldeporträtt*, Chap. V, pp. 87-102, Stockholm, 1882.

the other hand, the lofty idealism of the poet's own philosophy of life is infused into that of his principal characters in *Olaf Liljekrans* with a clarity that admits of no doubt as to the great problems which were now beginning to occupy his efforts.

In a previous article,<sup>4</sup> I pointed out the relation of *Olaf Liljekrans* to certain of Ibsen's later works (viz., *Paa Vidderne*, pp. 385-390, *Peer Gynt*, pp. 393-400), but there is still much to be said about the relation of *Olaf Liljekrans* to Ibsen's literary productions both previous and subsequent to the composition of this work. It is, therefore, the purpose of the following article to pick up the literary threads in *Olaf Liljekrans* and weave them together into some sort of organic unity, which will present Ibsen's literary development during this period in a clearer light than has heretofore been done.

The relation of Ibsen's *Olaf Liljekrans* to his little two-act play,<sup>5</sup> *Rypen i Justedal* (1850), has been treated in outline by Fredrik Paasche (see bibliography, foot-note 2, *Gildet paa Solhaug*, p. 65 ff., pp. 90-91, *Olaf Liljekrans*, pp. 142-143), who points out the essential features in which the two plays concur or diverge.

The bearing of *Olaf Liljekrans* upon Ibsen's literary development in the 50's cannot be satisfactorily determined without connecting this work with his earlier conception of the same story, as represented in *Rypen i Justedal*. Based upon the legend of *Justedalsrypa*, as contained in Faye's collection (p. 129) of *Norske Folkesagn* (Kra., 1844), Ibsen's *Rypen i Justedal* is but a fragmentary prelude (with slightly different situations) to his later work, in which he followed the story found in the folk ballad, *Oluf Liljukrans*, contained in Landstad's *Norske Folkeviser* (p. 355, Kra., 1853).

*Rypen i Justedal* is far less original than his later work, is without much poetry or imaginative power, and has very little action. Wherever the lyrical tone is predominant, Welhaven's style is clearly recognizable.

<sup>4</sup>"*Olaf Liljekrans* and Ibsen's later Works," J.E. Germ. Phil., 1912, Vol. XI, No. 3, pp. 381-401.

<sup>5</sup>Only part of the second act was ever finished; see Ibsen's *Efterladte Skrifter*, pp. 339-370, Kristiania, 1909.

In *Olaf Liljekrans*, on the other hand, situations arise in which a real dramatic power is revealed, while the lyrical passages show a fine sense of beauty, rarely equalled in Ibsen's verse; in fact, the poet shows in this work how well he was able to adapt the folk song to a dramatic setting.

The distinct improvement in the poetic and dramatic art of *Olaf Liljekrans* warrants a new comparison of the two works, with a view towards determining exactly in what way certain conceptions in the earlier play were modified or extended in the later, and what features, common to both plays, were elsewhere reflected in Ibsen's works. Therefore, in the following analysis of the literary elements present in *Olaf Liljekrans*, special reference will be made to *Rypen i Justedal*.

## A

## SATIRE

1) *Elements in Rypen i Justedal*

*Rypen i Justedal* was written in the conventional iambic pentameter of Öhlenschläger's tragedies, interspersed with rhymed verse and with prose. It is significant that the prose form begins where the priest Mogens is first introduced. Mogens is a satirical philistine, who stands out in sharp contrast to the other Romantic figures of the play, precisely after the fashion of such characters in the satirical comedies of *Heiberg* or *Hostrup*. Mogens does not fit the Romantic atmosphere of the play; he is an ordinary, self-satisfied, every-day person who likes good wine, quotes Latin to the peasants, and, tho afraid of Herr Bengt, is concerned for the latter's salvation. Herr Bengt himself, tho by no means the ordinary character that Mogens represents, takes a much more realistic and prosaic view of life than do the other characters in the play. It should be noted, further, that in the conversation between Mogens and Herr Bengt, there are revealed those events in the past, upon which the action of the play depends, after the same "analytical" method that Ibsen had previously employed in his satirical comedy, *Sankt Hansnatten*<sup>6</sup> (1852).

Likewise in *Olaf Liljekrans*, prose is generally used (instead of

<sup>6</sup> See my article on *Sankt Hansnatten*, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 1915, Vol. XIV, No. 3, p. 357.

the rhymed verse of the folk ballad), wherever the action of the play is advanced. The character Mogens disappears, but the farcical element is greatly extended in the amusing escapade of Hemming and Ingeborg, and especially in the relations of Hemming to his master, Arne fra Guldvik. The latter character has much in common with his prototype, Bengt in *Rypen i Justedal*, both of whom take the same prosaic and realistic view of life and have no faith in fairy-lore.<sup>7</sup>

In *Olaf Liljekrans*, this realistic view of life is further shared by Hemming and Ingeborg, who in their Romantic elopement, parody the idealism of true love, as represented by Olaf and Alfild. This travesty on Romantic idealism is in entire accord with the critical, burlesque spirit which Ibsen had before this time shown in his Andhrimner period (cf. his critique of Jensen's *Huldrens Hjem*, 1851). In *Sankt Hansnatten*<sup>8</sup> (1852), for instance, the philistine view of life is presented as a foil to Romantic idealism in the two pairs of lovers (*Paulsen-Juliane*, *Johannes Birk-Jomfru Anne*), precisely as in *Olaf Liljekrans* (*Hemming-Ingeborg*, *Olaf-Alfild*).

The wilful and capricious character of Ingeborg in *Olaf Liljekrans*, her coquetry and flirtatious attitude towards Hemming (Act I, 7), whom she now leads on by compromising methods and now repulses with assumed indignation, evidently harkens back to the character of Mereta in *Rypen i Justedal*, who assumes (Act II) towards Einar a similar, but far less emphatic attitude. Both Mereta and Ingeborg are at heart well disposed towards their lover's suit, both keep him in suspense by similar tactics, but finally give

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*Rypen i Justedal*

## Act I.

Knud (reiser sig). Du tror da ei paa vore Sagn—

Bengt. *Sligt er jo kun for Børn og Kvinder.**Olaf Liljekrans*

## Act I, 6

## Hemming

Men det er dog sandhed, det med bruden, som blev borte på bryllupskvelden.

## Arne

Ej, det var for mange aar siden, *nu hænder ikke sligt mere!*

<sup>8</sup> See my article on *Sankt Hansnatten*, p. 361.

their consent by presenting him with a token of love and fidelity. Ingeborg's underhanded method of egging Hemming on to elope, by reciting verses from the folk song (a satirical attitude that characterizes her throughout the play), has no counterpart in *Rypen i Justedal*, but is a device<sup>9</sup> of typically Romantic character.

### 2) *The Satirical Comedy in Olaf Liljekrans*

The relations of Ingeborg to Hemming in *Olaf Liljekrans* are extended into a satirical comedy after the fashion of Heiberg or Hostrup. The plot hinges on the trite question of a *mariage de convenance* which the lovers seek to escape; a theme, which Ibsen, as early as in *Sankt Hansnatten* (1852), had already touched upon. In *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1855) the same theme appeared and later in *Kjærlighedens Komædie* (finished in 1862, but begun as early as 1858), it was again developed into a satirical comedy, many features of which may hearken back to both *Olaf Liljekrans* and *Sankt Hansnatten* (cf. e.g. Paulsen's cynical attitude towards love and marriage, which reflects the whole spirit of *Kjærlighedens Komædie*).

Furthermore, certain technical devices in *Olaf Liljekrans* are also to be found in both *Sankt Hansnatten* and *Gildet paa Solhaug*; such as, for instance, the misunderstanding between Hemming and Fru Kirsten as to Ingeborg's suitor, when both parties purposely withhold the suitor's name (cf. in *Gildet paa Solhaug* Margit's reference to Signe's lover—"hvis en bejler red sig hid i kveld" Act I—whom Signe supposes to be Gudmund but who is in reality Knut Gæsling).

### 3) *Resemblance to Holberg's "Comedies d'Intrigue"*

Aside from its satirical vein, this farcical episode (Hemming-Ingeborg) in *Olaf Liljekrans* bears a general resemblance to Holberg's comedies, which were extensively imitated by Heiberg and the Danish Vaudeville writers (cf. Heiberg's essay, *Om Vaudeville som dramatisk Digart og dens Betydning paa den danske Skueplads*, 1826).

In *Olaf Liljekrans*, the *mariage de convenance* fails and a true love affair is consummated in spite of the parents' selfish motives.

<sup>9</sup> Compare Tegnér's *Frithiofs saga*, Canto VI, *Frithiof spelar schack*, where Frithiof answers Hilding in terms of the game of chess which he is playing.

This is made possible chiefly thru the machinations of the quick witted Ingeborg.

Such is also the traditional theme of Holberg's *Comedies d'Intrigue*, in which the parents are outwitted thru some clever device upon the part of the lovers (*Leander* and *Lenore*), who are in turn generally assisted in their machinations ("spille dem et puds," "sætte voxnæse paa dem") by their clever servants (*Henrik* and *Pernille*).

Ingeborg has much in common with the resourceful and coquettish *Pernille*, while *Hemming* (like *Henrik*) tho indispensable to his master, is continually outwitting him. Arne calls him repeatedly "a sly dog"—*en listig hund* (Act II, 10)—and is in continual fear that *Hemming* will play him some underhanded trick. When Arne, for instance, realizes he has been lead about on a wild-goose chase the whole day long, he attributes it all to *Hemming's* machinations (Act II, 10): "Dette har været mig *en forbandet*<sup>10</sup> dag! O, det er dog en *listig hund*, den *Hemming!*" And again, when *Alfhild* is on trial and *Fru Kirsten* fails to gain a satisfactory answer from her, Arne exclaims in true *Arlequin* fashion (aside to the audience—Act III, 8): "Havde *Hemming* været i live, så skulde han nok fået sandheden ud af hende; han var bleven så *listig* på sine sidste dage."

Ibsen himself had read and admired Holberg, and it is not surprising if traces of Holberg's influence can be detected in his own works. Ibsen frequently quoted Holberg, as for instance, in his *Fortale* to *Gildet paa Solhaug*<sup>11</sup> (1883) where he brands his Christiania critics as young *Jeronimuses*—"Jeronimus" in Holberg's comedies represents a type of restricted and arrogant intellect. Likewise in *De Unges Forbund* (1869), Ibsen makes a direct reference<sup>12</sup> to Holberg's *Jeppe paa Bierget*. Holberg's keen satirical

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Holberg's *Jeppe paa Bierget*, Act V, 3, when *Jeppe* realizes he has been duped: "Det er nogle forbandede Historier, naar jeg ret eftertænker det."

<sup>11</sup> "Blev et eller andet vers et sådant uhyre påtruffet, kunde man være sikker på, at de unge kristianiensiske *Jeronimusser*, ligervis som Holbergs egen, udråbte deres: Hillemand, verden står ikke til påske!"

<sup>12</sup> *De Unges Forbund*

Act II, 1

Aslaksen.—Jo, pyt! *Hvar længe var Jeppe i paradis?* Knald og fald, ud af det igen;—hele herligheden faldt i fisk, som vi siger i trykkeriet.

So too *Jeppe* says (*Jeppe paa Bierget*, Act IV, 1): "Hvorlænge var Abraham i Paradiis?"



sense was fully appreciated by Ibsen, who on many other occasions quoted him; in fact, the Danish comedy writer was one of the few foreign authors whom Ibsen read<sup>13</sup> very extensively.

Georg Brandes (*Henrik Ibsen*, Tredje Indtryk, p. 131, København, 1898) has pointed out the similarity in the issue of the Ingeborg-Hemming romance to the situation involved in *Kjærlighedens Komedie* between Svanhild and Falk, both of whom suffer, as do Ingeborg and Hemming, a sudden disillusionment of Romantic ideals.

Similarly, Vasenius (*Henrik Ibsen, Ett Skaldeporträtt*, p. 98, Stockholm, 1882) notes that the outcome of the Ingeborg-Hemming romance resembles the lamentable story of Pastor Stråmand, who married for "true love," disregarding all the advantages that might accrue from a *mariage de convenance*.

Vasenius further remarks (*ibid.*, p. 93) that the three characters (Arne, Hemming, Ingeborg), representing the *personae dramatis* of this little farce, are common, every-day people who, by their unsuccessful attempts to reach the same Romantic heights as do the other characters of the play, make both themselves and Romantic idealism ridiculous.

Both Brandes and Vasenius have thus noted in these satirical elements of *Olaf Liljekrans* the advance in Realism and the decay of Romantic ideals. But, it must also be noted that *the form, in which these satirical elements are presented*, is an inheritance from the traditional Danish comedy, which Ibsen had previously so successfully imitated in *Sankt Hansnatten*. Both in *Sankt Hansnatten* and in *Olaf Liljekrans*, two pairs of lovers, representing the idealist and the philistine, are introduced as a foil to each other, and the same satirical attitude is assumed in both plays towards the illusionary ideals of the Romanticist. Ibsen's early dissatisfaction<sup>14</sup> with the ideals of the Romantic School thus found in *Olaf Liljekrans* the same form for expression as in *Sankt Hansnatten*.

<sup>13</sup> See Roman Woerner, *Henrik Ibsen*, II, 43, München, 1912: "Also wird er wohl, oder muss er gar an die Tradition des grossen nordischen Komödiendichters angeknüpft haben;" also Anathon Aall, "Filosofien i Norden," pp. 99 ff., *Edda*, 3, 1917.

<sup>14</sup> See my article on *Sankt Hansnatten*, pp. 365 ff.

## B

## EXTENSION OF FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Aside from the satirical elements, there are certain fundamental concepts in *Rypen i Justedal*, which serve as a vehicle of truth for the poet, and which he consequently expands in *Olaf Liljekrans* and in his later plays. A part of the material and some of the characters (as shown above) in *Rypen i Justedal* were discarded in *Olaf Liljekrans*, as unessential to the new conception of the story based upon the folk ballad. In the latter work, for instance, hardly a reference is made to the Black Death (*Svartedauen*, cf. *landfarsottens tid*, *Olaf Liljekrans*, Act I, 13) which plays such an important part in the former. On the hand, the figure of Knud, the minstrel, is preserved intact in Thorgjerd of *Olaf Liljekrans*, whose relations to Alfild are, furthermore, so extended that they play a far greater part in the dramatic conflict. The Romantic idealism of these two children of nature clash with the realities of life, with far greater dramatic force in *Olaf Liljekrans* than in *Rypen i Justedal*.

Thus, Ibsen preserved in *Olaf Liljekrans* only those concepts in *Rypen i Justedal*, which were essential to the greater problems involved in his later work, many of which were as yet only dimly outlined, but in later years became the vital elements of his poetry. At least two such vital elements deserve special comment, viz. (1) the ideal of the poet's 'call,' and (2) the conflict between *Idealism* and *Realism*.

1) *The Poet's 'Call'*

It is significant that as early as the year 1850, Ibsen fashioned out of the simple character of Knud the minstrel, in *Rypen i Justedal*, a symbolic figure representing that ideal 'call' which was the one great stimulus to Ibsen's own life's work.

Paasche has already shown (*Gildet paa Solhaug*, p. 54) how the name, *Knud*, was changed to that of *Thorgjerd*, who was none other than the minstrel *Torgeir Audunson*, whom Welhaven had glorified in his poem of 1849 (*Alfernes Lind*). Knud and Thorgjerd are divergent in their attitude towards fairy-lore; Knud actually believes in the supernatural, while Thorgjerd views such as mere poetic imagery from which he may draw inspiration for his art—so far had Ibsen progressed towards a realistic attitude in this regard. In spite of this divergence, these two symbolic figures are,

nevertheless, in complete accord with reference to the poet's mission in life. Thorgjerd's apotheosis of the poet's mission, as interpreter of the national spirit, (Act III, 10), is merely a verse rendering of Knud's (Act II). Nowhere else does such a close correspondence in thought and diction occur in the two plays; evidently then, this conception was a fundamental idea with Ibsen, which he could on no account afford to discard. In fact, the growth of this ideal, in its universal application to the individual in life (i.e., 'the call') is the most marked phase of Ibsen's struggle towards the realization of true happiness, and perhaps the most important element in his idealistic philosophy (cf. this ideal especially in *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*). The 'call' of the poet was, furthermore, a matter of vital *personal* importance to Ibsen. Later in 1864, this concept received its most beautiful expression in *Kongsemnerne* (Act IV, 1) in the celebrated dialog between King Skule and Jatgejr, the Skald; a reflection of Ibsen's own soul, for at this time he entertained grave doubts as to his own mission in life.

Even as early as the 50's, this ideal conception of the poet's mission, as spokesman of the nation, can be clearly seen in Ibsen's writings, aside from the symbolic figure of Knud—Thorgjerd (as shown above). In the same year as *Rypen i Justedal* (1850), for instance, Ibsen presented to the Norwegian nation, in his poem, *Til Norges Skjalder*,<sup>15</sup> a most powerful appeal to this ideal, and in the next year (1851) gave it a more definite and detailed expression in his critique<sup>16</sup> of Jensen's *Huldrens Hjem*. Furthermore, Ibsen's

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*Til Norges Skjalder.*

Er ikke den Gnist I eie da kun  
 En Gave jer skjænket til Nytte for Folket,  
 Der kræver af Skjaldens begeistrede Mund  
 Sin Smærte, sin Lyst og sin Længsel fortolket.

<sup>16</sup> "Den nationale forfatter, er den, der forstår at meddele i sit værk hin grundtone, der klinger os imøde fra fjeld og dal, fra li og strand, men *fremfor alt fra vort eget indre.*"

Compare this, for instance, with the minstrel's apotheosis of poetry in *Rypen i Justedal* (Knud, in Act II):

"Og hvad der rører sig i Folkets Barm,  
 det maa jeg tolke gennem mine Strengel!"

and in *Olaf Liljekrans* (Thorgjerd, in Act III, 10):

"maa lure på det liv, som i brystet banker,  
 klæde folkets drømme i toner og ord,  
 og klare dets gærende tanker!"

cynical attitude in *Sankt Hansnatten* (1852) towards the Romantic poets indicates his growing dissatisfaction with them, as interpreters of the national spirit ("Det er Huldren—det Nationaleste vi har"). In fact, the relation of the poet to the nation was one of those factors involved in Ibsen's break with the traditional Romantic ideals. Thus, the figure of Knud-Thorgjerd represents a most vital element in Ibsen's literary development.

## 2) *Idealism and Realism*

It has already been shown that the realistic tone in the satirical elements of *Olaf Liljekrans* marks a decline in Ibsen's Romantic ideals. The conflict between *Realism* and *Idealism* reaches its crisis, however, in the relations of Alfhild to Olaf, where the illusionary visions of fairy-lore are brought into sharp contrast with the actual facts in life. Tho glorifying the ideal, Ibsen here, at the same time, assumes an attitude of hostility towards the visionary Romanticist who, like Peer Gynt, is blind to the proper relation of fairy-lore to human life. Such an attitude was by no means new, for he had already sounded the same note during the immediate previous years in his criticisms of the Romantic poets, whom he also had satirized in *Sankt Hansnatten*. The trend towards Realism was, therefore, not so spontaneous as is generally believed. In a word, Ibsen's line of development must be traced from *Sankt Hansnatten* (1852) thru *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1855) to *Olaf Liljekrans* (1856). Ibsen's *Andhrimmer* period is the starting point, and if we hold this in mind, the decline in his Romantic ideals does not appear so abrupt as the immediate relation of *Gildet paa Solhaug* to *Olaf Liljekrans* would seem to indicate.

George Brandes (*Henrik Ibsen*, Tredje Indtryk, pp. 130-131) has pointed out that in these scenes where *Idealism* and *Realism* clash, there is a general resemblance in style and an unmistakable kinship in thought to certain scenes in *Peer Gynt* (cf. especially the *Dovregubbe* scene with *Olaf Liljekrans*, Act II, 4). Both Brandes (ibid.) and Vasenius (*Henrik Ibsen, Ett Skaldeporträtt*, p. 92) point out the unmistakable kinship in thought between *Olaf Liljekrans* and *Kjærligheds Komædie* (cf. the relations of *Falk* to *Svanhild*). But this kinship in thought is not confined to Ibsen's later Romantic works such as *Peer Gynt* and *Kjærlighedens Komædie*.

Indeed, the conflict, so plainly marked in *Olaf Liljekrans*, between the *philistine* and the *idealist*, between *convention* and *conscience* constitutes the central theme of the author's later problem plays.

a) *Relation to Peer Gynt*

In my previous article on *Olaf Liljekrans* (*J. E. Germ. Phil.* Vol. XI, No. 3, pp. 393-400), Brandes' parallel between *Olaf Liljekrans* and *Peer Gynt* was supplemented by additional scenes from the latter play. But these can be further extended and their relation shown to the initial situations in *Rypen i Justedal*.

It was pointed out in my article (pp. 397-398) that the scene in *Peer Gynt* (Act III, 3), where Solvejg joins Peer upon the mountains, bears a close resemblance in thought and style to that scene in *Olaf Liljekrans* (Act II, 11) in which Alfhild likewise abandons all she holds dear, in order to give her life to him whom she has chosen as her life's companion. This situation evidently had its inception in *Rypen i Justedal* (Act II), where Alfhild expresses the same thought, but without that abandonment and poetic beauty which characterizes the corresponding passages in the two later works.<sup>17</sup>

Immediately after her lover's return (*Rypen i Justedal*, Act II; *Olaf Liljekrans*, Act I, 10), Alfhild implores<sup>18</sup> him not to jilt her, now that her fate lies entirely in his hands, just as does Solvejg in *Peer Gynt* (Act III, 3) when, after severing her home-ties, she rejoins Peer upon the mountains:

<sup>17</sup>

*Rypen i Justedal.*

Act II

Alfhild. Ja, ja, jeg vil!—  
o, du vil sikkert være god mod Alfhild,  
naar hun forlader denne fagre Dal,  
da har hun Intet, Intet uden dig.

<sup>18</sup>

*Rypen i Justedal.*

Act II

Alfhild.—(iler imod ham) nu maa du ei meer  
saasnart forlade Alfhild,—

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act I, 10

Alfhild

O, bliv, bliv! gå ikke fra mig!

“Gud signe dit arbejd. Du får ikke vrage mig.  
Budsendt jeg kommer, og så får du tage mig.”

The lover's assurance<sup>19</sup> of fidelity towards Alfhild is very simply expressed in *Rypen i Justedal* (Act II) but is extended with Romantic fervor in *Olaf Liljekrans* (Act III, 3), where Olaf's tender solicitation for Alfhild seems to be reflected in that exquisite scene in *Peer Gynt* (Act III, 3), where Peer welcomes Solvejg into his future home upon the mountains.

A further resemblance to *Peer Gynt* may be detected in the second Scene of Act III in *Olaf Liljekrans*. Here Olaf, in his search for Alfhild meets the minstrel Thorgjerd alone on the mountains. This symbolic figure, who is supposed to be in the possession of supernatural powers and is, therefore, a most dangerous person for those who have wronged him—Olaf has already deserted Alfhild, Thorgjerd's foster-child—resembles the ominous personality of the *Button-Moulder* (cf. also the *Devil*, or the *Dovre-gubbe*), with whom Peer is finally confronted (Act. V.). Thorgjerd's insinuations as to an impending disaster (“Den jagt er farlig!”), his skill in repartee, and the laconic expression of his veiled sarcasm—almost the whole scene is written in stichomythy—bears a general resem-

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<sup>19</sup>

*Rypen i Justedal*

Act II

Bjørn. At jeg vil være god mod dig og tænke paa dig allene alle mine Dage—

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act III, 3

Olaf

Kummerens tårer skal jeg kysse fra din kind,  
skal jevne din sti, skal bære dig på hænder,  
skal svale sorgen, som svider i dit sind,  
skal læge det sår, som i hjertet brænder!

*Peer Gynt*

Act III, 3

Peer Gynt

Så har jeg dig! Ind! Lad mig se dig i stuen!  
Gå ind! Jeg skal hente tyri til gruen;  
lunt skal det varme og bjart skal det lyse,  
blødt skal du sidde og aldrig skal du fryse.

blance<sup>20</sup> in style and thought to the last act of *Peer Gynt*, where the *Button-Moulder* accosts Peer. It should also be noted, aside from the reference<sup>21</sup> to the shot which rebounds upon the huntsman (cf. the legend of Peer Gynt in *Asbjørnsen* and *Moe*, 1848), that Thorgjerd takes leave of Olaf with the same ominous reference to a future meeting:

“Farvel! Dvæler du her, så kan vi mødes,  
når jeg kommer nedover.”  
“Nå da, lad gå,  
Men husk, ved næste korsvej vi mødes.”

b) *Relation to Ibsen's Problem Plays*

In *Olaf Liljekrans* Ibsen touches for the first time upon the great problem of individualism. In Act I, 10, Olaf declares to Alfhild that of all the sacred relations of life, which his love for her has caused him to forget, the most important is *his own self*:

“Jeg glemte mere end Gud og hjem, mere end himmel og  
jord, jeg glemte mig selv!”

<sup>20</sup> The opening lines of this scene illustrate the similarity of style in both plays.

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act III, 2

Olaf

Godt møde, fremmedkarl!

Thorgjerd

Tak, det samme igen. Du er tidlig ude!

Olaf

Eller sent; tidlig på dagen, men sent på natten.

*Peer Gynt*

Act V

Knappestøberen

Godt møde, gubbe!

Peer Gynt

God kveld, min ven!

Knappestøberen

Karlen har hastværk. Hvor skal han hen?

<sup>21</sup> “Ifald skuddet rammer skytten selv, så times ham den bedste lykke, når han ingen lykke har med sig.”

This has no counterpart in *Rypen i Justedal*, but Paasche ("Olaf Liljekrans," *Maal og Minne*, p. 147, 1909) points out the origin of this passage in the folk song, *Herr Byting og elvekvinnu*, (Landstad, p. 459, 1853). In the folk song, the hero has forgotten earth, heaven and God, and is under the delusion<sup>22</sup> that he himself was born in *Elfland* and had always lived there. By making the hero in *Olaf Liljekrans*, on the other hand, directly state that he *forgot himself*, Ibsen gives expression to the great problem of self-realization ("at være sig selv"), which later occupied him in both *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* and which is inseparably connected with the ever present conflict between Idealism and Realism involved in all his subsequent dramas. Olaf continually struggles with the growing presentiment that the question at stake is not really the material welfare of his family, as represented by his mother, but his *own happiness*. As soon as he recovers his true self (Act III, 8) he throws down the gauntlet to his mother, who has sought to force him into this unnatural union, and reveals *the false relation of parent to child*, which later became one of the principal themes in Ibsen's problem plays.<sup>23</sup>

Like Karsten Bernick in *Samfundets Støtter* (1877), Olaf (Act III, 8) exonerates the accused and makes a clean breast of his own guilt. Not until then does he gain the victory over self and exper-

<sup>22</sup> "I Elvarland der er eg fødd og der er eg boren,  
og i Elvarland er alle mine hofklæðir skorn.  
I Elvarland der vil eg liva og døy,  
i Elvarland der finn eg mi festarmøy."

<sup>23</sup> Cf., for instance,

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act III, 8

Olaf

Stor sorg voldes mig derved, skøndt det er  
længe siden *I var en sand moder for mig*.

*Lille Eyolf*

Act I

Almers. Nu ser jeg, at det højeste, jeg har at gøre her i verden, det er  
*at være en sand far for Eyolf*.

*Samfundets Støtter*

Act IV

Karsten Bernick. Og jeg lover dig, du skal aldrig få grund til det. Her-  
efter skal du få lov til at vokse op, ikke som arvetager til *min* livsgerning, men  
som den, der selv har en livsgerning i vente.



ience the full realization that only *in* and *thru himself* can he gain that flower of happiness, which Alfhild had promised him (Act I, 9): "Da—først da kan du lykken finde!" Thus, the momentous question of personal responsibility is raised, which is inevitably connected with the problem of self-realization.

The chastening influence of sorrow, which both Olaf and Alfhild recognize, is also a conception which was paramount in Ibsen's poetry. Both characters undergo this moral purification, which prepares them for the final realization of happiness. Alfhild's heroic attitude towards Fru Kirsten (Act III, 8), when confronted by torture and death, is an expression of that high idealism which the spirit of love engenders. Alfhild here represents the spirit over against the letter of the law; thus shifting the moral<sup>24</sup> responsibility for the catastrophe upon Fru Kirsten herself and those who have been guilty of infringement upon the law of the spirit (i.e., of true love).

Like Irene in *Når Vi Døde Vægner* (1899), Alfhild here raises the great question of life's valuations and of moral responsibility, as determined by these divergent ideals. After Olaf has denied her, she no longer regards herself among the living, since she has lost that which gave her life its true worth (Act III, 8):

"Da Olaf fornægtede sin kærlighed,  
da slukkedes mit liv,—jeg lever ikke længer."

just as does Irene, after suffering the disillusionment of that ideal of love, upon which the real content of her life depends (Act I): "Jeg var *død* i mange år." Such is the death of the spirit, in which the human soul suffers even more intensely than in the death of the body.

Furthermore, altho such a great lapse of time separates the two plays (1856-1899), Ibsen uses in both the same poetic figure<sup>25</sup> (viz., that of *physical burial*) for the deceased spirit.

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<sup>24</sup>

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act III, 8

Alfhild

Ja, jeg har brændt din gård inat; men du og  
Olaf og alle I andre derude *har øvet en værre jærð*  
*mod mig.*

Similarly, the ideal, which these two women were to realize in the union with their chosen consort, is in both plays expressed in the same poetic figure,<sup>25</sup> viz., 'the glory of the world' (*alverdens herlighed*). This conception, based upon the biblical passage of the Temptation (Matth. IV, 8) is one of Ibsen's favorite recurrent phrases (cf. *Kongsemnerne*, Act V, *Kejser og Galilæer*, *Cæsar's Fra-fald*, Act III). The measure of man's happiness lies not in the attainment of earthly glory, but in fulfillment of the law governing the development of the human soul.

In the conflict between Idealism and Realism in *Olaf Liljekrans* Ibsen thus touched upon the essential elements of his idealistic philosophy and of all those great psychological problems which were the theme of his later dramas.

## C

## OLAF LILJEKRANS AND THE SAGA STYLE

The introduction of the Viking drama into Norwegian literature in the year 1857, was marked by the innovation of a literary style entirely different from that employed in this type of drama by

25

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act III, 3

Alfhild

Nu sænkes jeg i jorden ned!  
 nu kaster de muldet derover!  
 Og her må jeg ligge med all min nød  
 må leve og lide, skøndt jeg er død:

*Naar Vi Døde Vaagner*

Act I

Irene

Så sænkte de mig ned i et gravkammer med jernstænger for lugen. Og med polstrede vægge,—så ingen ovenover på jorden kunde høre gravskrigene.— Men nu begynder jeg så halvvejs at stå op fra de døde.

26

*Olaf Liljekrans*

Act III, 3

Olaf

Du vilde ud i livet, sagde du; du vilde lære *alverdens herlighed* at kende.  
*Naar Vi Døde Vaagner*

Act II

Professor Rubeck (spøger bortledende). Loved jeg dig ikke at ta dig med mig op på et højt berg og vise dig *alverdens herlighed*?

Öhlenschläger and the Danish Romanticists. In this year, both Ibsen in *Hærmændene* and Bjørnson in *Mellem Slagene* discarded the cumbersome iambic pentameter of Öhlenschläger's tragedies for a clear, concise and laconic prose form in imitation of the original style of the Icelandic saga.

In his essay on the *Heroic Ballad* (*Om kæmpevisen og dens betydning for kunstpoesien*, 1857), Ibsen openly declared his dissatisfaction with Öhlenschläger's adaptation of form to material and especially with his use of the classic iambic pentameter, on the ground that this was not a national type of verse form. "A *Hakon Jarl* in prose," he asserts, "would be, in Öhlenschläger's hands, just as poetical as in verse form."

According to Botten-Hansen (*Illustreret Nyhedsblad*, 1863, No. 29) Ibsen first began *Hærmændene* in verse form, but in view of Ibsen's criticism of Öhlenschläger's use of the iambic pentameter it is hardly to be assumed that Ibsen chose this form of verse for his *Hærmændene*. Whatever verse form he did choose,<sup>27</sup> it was probably very soon discarded for prose.

Tho the prose style of *Hærmændene* resembles that of Bjørnson's *Mellem Slagene*, it is far from likely that this resemblance was due to a direct imitation of Bjørnson's work, altho the latter appeared shortly before *Hærmændene* (early in the winter of 1856-1857).

Christen Collin<sup>28</sup> believes that the coincidence of the saga style in Ibsen's *Hærmændene* and Bjørnson's *Mellem Slagene* (also in his peasant tales, *Thron* and *Synnøve Solbakken*, of this same year) was not due to any conscious imitation on Ibsen's part, but rather to a desire to rival Bjørnson in this new field.

Collin's view as to Ibsen's independence in this matter may possibly be confirmed by Ibsen's letter of April 28, 1857, to Botten-

<sup>27</sup> Roman Woerner (*Henrik Ibsen*, I, 69, München, 1912) surmises the *iambic trimeter*, which Ibsen in his essay on the *Heroic Ballad* viewed much more favorably than he did the traditional iambic pentameter.

<sup>28</sup> Christen Collin, *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson*, II, 212, Kristiania, 1906: "Henrik Ibsens sagastil i 'Hærmændene' er ikke en efterligning af Bjørnsons sagastil i 'Mellem Slagene' eller i 'Synnøve.' Men efter al sandsynlighed er Ibsens sagastil bleven til i bevidst *kappestrid* med Bjørnsons."

Hansen (*Breve*, I, No. 72). In this letter<sup>29</sup> Ibsen writes that the drama, upon which he was then working (viz., *Hærmændene*), was to be both in contents and *tone* (i.e., style?) somewhat different from his previous works. That he here emphasizes the *tone* of the work may indicate, as Ferdinand Lynner points<sup>30</sup> out, that Ibsen had already, of his own accord, determined to use the saga style in *Hærmændene*. If Ibsen had also read *Mellem Slagene*, as seems most likely from the fact that the latter work had already the winter before been submitted to the theater at Bergen (see Collin, *ibid.*, II, 212), then it may be inferred that Bjørnson's style in *Mellem Slagene* was merely an incidental factor in Ibsen's choice of the same style in *Hærmændene*. No doubt Ibsen clearly saw that Bjørnson had chosen the right way.

Both Lynner and Collin, however, might have further substantiated their contentions, if they had not overlooked the possible connection between *Olaf Liljekrans* and *Hærmændene* in the matter of prose style. Paasche<sup>31</sup> is, to my knowledge, the first to point out that the peculiar inversion of word order and the terse dramatic presentation in *Olaf Liljekrans* may indicate a close connection between this work and *Hærmændene*. Paasche's inference may be further substantiated by other points of resemblance between the two plays.

*Olaf Liljekrans* was written in the year 1856, just between the time of *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1855) and of *Hærmændene* (1857). In his *Fortale* to *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1883), Ibsen tells us how his impressions from the *Volsungasaga* had led him to write this play, which was in fact only a lyrical rendering of *Hærmændene* as he had first conceived it. The motif for the plot of both plays was based

<sup>29</sup> "Jeg har allerede et nyt dramatisk arbeide mellem hænderne; det vil i indhold og *tone* blive temmelig forskjelligt fra mine tidligere."

<sup>30</sup> Ferdinand Lynner, *Hærmændene paa Helgeland*, *Henrik Ibsens forhold til kilderne i den norrøne Litteratur*, Smaaskrifter fra den litteraturhistoriske Seminar, No. VI, pp. 5-6, Kristiania, 1909.

<sup>31</sup> Paasche, "Olaf Liljekrans," *Maal og Minne*, p. 160, 1909: "Ibsens prosa har en langt tydeligere norsk klang end hans poesie. Næsten i sagatone er den holdt. Den eiendommelige ordstilling og den knappe fremstillingsmaate pøker ned mot "*Hærmændene paa Helgeland*."

upon the quarrel between the two women, Brynhild and Gudrun, of the *Volsungasaga*.

Now, it will be noted that those prose passages in *Olaf Liljekrans*, which bear the closest resemblance to the saga style of *Hærmændene*, are to be found in the scenes involving the family feud between Fru Kirsten and Arne fra Guldvik. To be sure, there are traces of this same style (notably in the inversion of negative particles) elsewhere present in the play, but they are the most clearly marked here in the heated controversy between the heads of these two families (Act I, 4). The style in these passages is clearly suited to that element in *Olaf Liljekrans* most typical of the sagas, viz., the *traditional family feud*. The sensitive pride of both characters, their suspicions as to each other's sincerity, the increasing bitterness towards each other as the quarrel over the apparent failure of their reconciliation progresses, preserve the traditional character of the Icelandic family feud, such as that between Brynhild and Gudrun of the *Volsungasaga*. Such is the character of the quarrel in *Hærmændene* between Hjórdis and Dagny or between Ørnulf and Hjórdis, engendered by an *inherited family feud*. As in *Olaf Liljekrans*, each participant in the quarrel recites the past wrongs done to his kinsmen and eggs on the opposing party to violent expressions of wrath; evil insinuations and coarse vituperation are mutually exchanged.

Thus, not only does the style<sup>32</sup> of *Olaf Liljekrans* in these passages resemble that of *Hærmændene*, but also the typical family feud of the Icelandic saga is in both plays presented in the same fashion. The substitution of a terse, laconic dialog indicates a further trace of saga influence, in view of the prolixity elsewhere found in the play.

Aside from the question of style and dramatic presentation there are other definite points of resemblance between the two plays, which may indicate that Ibsen retained in *Hærmændene* certain impressions from *Olaf Liljekrans*.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. especially the use of the inverted word order and the recurrence of certain set phrases typical of the saga language; for instance, "ikke er det nyt," "sent blev jeg færdig," "nu ser jeg grant," etc.

In Act II, 9 of *Olaf Liljekrans*, for instance, the relations of Alfhild to Olaf are declared illegitimate, just as are those of Hjørdis to Gunnar in *Hærmændene* (Act I), on the ground that these parties have not complied with the statutes of the civil law; Olaf was already betrothed to Ingeborg and Hjørdis had been taken away by force in a Viking raid. Both Alfhild and Hjørdis are, therefore, accused of being "concubines" (*friller*).

This motif in *Olaf Liljekrans*, as Paasche (*ibid.*, p. 150) points out, is most probably based upon the folk ballad, *Liti Kerstis hevn* (Landstad, p. 551), where Little Kersti is likewise accused of being a concubine ("deð er herre Pers frille"); out of revenge for this she sets fire to the church where her lover's wedding-ceremony is taking place, just as does Alfhild in *Olaf Liljekrans*.

In *Hærmændene*, on the other hand, the situation shows a very strong resemblance, both in thought and language, to that chapter in the *Egilssaga*<sup>33</sup> (Peterson's translation, I, 181-184), where exactly the same legal question is raised in Egil's suit against Bergonund.

Granting the diversity of source, there is here, nevertheless, such a close resemblance between the two plays in the situation involved, in dramatic presentation and in phraseology, that one may be justified in inferring that Ibsen retained in *Hærmændene* a general impression of the parallel situation in *Olaf Liljekrans*. The following passages illustrate the point in question; the italicized words show how closely in diction the two passages resemble each other:

	<i>Olaf Liljekrans</i>
	Act II, 9
	Ingeborg
	Hemming skal ikke
for alteret med Alfhild;—han er for god til at	
<i>ægte anden mands frille!</i>	
	Olaf
	(med et udråb)
<i>Beskæmmet!</i>	
	Gæsterne
<i>Frillet</i>	

<sup>33</sup> See Lynner, *ibid.*, p. 45.

Olaf

*Forbandelse over mig! Beskæmmet er hun!*

Ingeborg

*Ja, højt nævner jeg ordet: Hun er anden mands frille!* Lad den modsige mig, som tør.*Hærmændene paa Helgeland*

Act I

Ørnulf (med hævet stemme). *Jo, højt skal det siges! Hærtagen kvinde har ingen lovlig husbond!*Hjørdis (i vildt udbrud). *Forhånet! beskæmmet!* (med dirrende stemme). Det—det skal du komme til at angre!Ørnulf (vedblivende). *Hærtagen kvinde er kun at agte som frilleviv ejter loven!*

Whatever the source upon which Ibsen based this scene in *Hærmændene*, the similarity in style and wording to the parallel scene in *Olaf Liljekrans* seems too close to be merely fortuitous. At any rate, it is certain that Ibsen had already in *Olaf Liljekrans* adopted a prose style that anticipates the saga style of *Hærmændene*, and this fact alone seems to me to be a satisfactory answer to the question as to Ibsen's indebtedness to Bjørnson in this regard.

Therefore, the traditional view that Ibsen was actually indebted to Bjørnson for the saga style in *Hærmændene*, must be discarded,<sup>34</sup> in view of the fact that Ibsen had already begun to try his hand at this new style in *Olaf Liljekrans* (1856) before the appearance of Bjørnson's *Mellem Slagene* and *Synnøve Solbakken* in 1857.

It is to be hoped that the above investigation as to the composite literary character of *Olaf Liljekrans* has shown (1) that Ibsen in this work was inclined to revert to the spirit of his *Andhrimmer* period,<sup>35</sup> thereby paving the way for the hostile attitude towards society which he assumed in *Kjærlighedens Komædie*, in *Brand* and in *Peer Gynt*, and (2) that his break with the traditional Romantic

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Roman Woerner, *Henrik Ibsen*, I, 69, München, 1912: "Mag er tatsächlich für sein in Versen—in Trimetern—begonnenes Schauspiel, *erst durch Bjørnson bestimmt*, die archaische Prosaform gewählt haben; immerhin kann *Synnøve Solbakken* nur als der äussere, einen innern Prozess beschleunigende Anlass gelten."

<sup>35</sup> Compare Introduction to Ibsen's *Ejterladte Skrifter* (by Halvdan Koht and Julius Elias), p. LXVIII: "Der kan ingen tvil være om at den nye periode i Ibsens digtning i flere henseender betegner *en tilbagegriben til hans "Andhrimmer"*-tid med dens polemiske stilling til samtidens bevægelser."

literary ideals, as manifested in *Hærmændene*, was already anticipated in *Olaf Liljekrans*.

Thus, the lines of Ibsen's literary development are drawn more closely together. Tho there may be a direct connection between *Peer Gynt* and Ibsen's *Andhrimner* period,<sup>36</sup> nevertheless, the intermediate relation of *Olaf Liljekrans* to *Peer Gynt* shows that the polemical attitude manifested in Ibsen's *Andhrimner* period was still a vital element in his poetry, an element which was gradually gathering new impulse for expression. Ibsen's demand for a clearer vision than that which the vague literary ideals of the Romantic poets afforded him is thus reflected in *Olaf Liljekrans*. This clearer vision he certainly did attain in adopting for *Olaf Liljekrans* a new prose style, which later became the vehicle of expression for the Norwegian Viking drama.

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<sup>36</sup> Compare Act II of Jensen's *Huldrebrylluppet* (*En Hal i Jutulbjerget*) printed in *Andhrimner*, with the *Dovregubbe* scene in *Peer Gynt*, which also points back to a connection with the political travesty in *Norma*, tho only in a purely formal way.